

Against the Grain

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Tom Hogan, Sr. Profile

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have the entire text of documents, people just are not satisfied, so we had to sell out to companies like EBSCO that have the resources to acquire the original articles and make them deliverable.

DTH: And as I recall, at the time, full text was just getting started, so that was a wise and forward-looking decision on your part.

TH: Well, I would like to think so! It was probably serendipitous more than anything else.

DTH: Does that bring us up to date as to the company and the business it is in?

TH: I should mention two other acquisitions, both in the early 2000s. Streaming Media was a product from Penton Media that we acquired in 2002. It was basically just a trade name and a Website at the time, and some mailing lists that they had built over the years. There had been a conference and a magazine, but both had both been discontinued after a rapid rise and fall. We fell in love with the idea of streaming media, which had had its glory days back in the 1990s. We bought it very cheaply from Penton and have built it into one of our best products now, which is *Streaming Media* magazine and two conferences: *Streaming Media East* and *Streaming Media West*. It seemed like a logical progression from the online world that we came from because streaming is obviously an online thing, and there are some overlapping interests between the online world as we know it from the library and information technology perspective and the entertainment world from which streaming came.

In 2003, we acquired *CRM* magazine and its Website, which has to do with customer relationship management and has become one of our best products. It is more of a mainstream IT executive's magazine for people in the customer relationship and customer service field. That led us into an acquisition a few years later of a conference and magazine called *Speech Technology*, which has to do with the interactive voice recognition field: everything that you make fun of when you have to interact with a company using voices. Sometimes it is a nightmare, and sometimes it works very well. It is a field that is highly technical, and we again felt that it fit in with our company structure and our interest in information technologies of all types.

DTH: So you have become quite a diverse company from your beginnings in the online information business. It is diversified, but everything is related, so it hangs together. What about *Taxonomy Boot Camp*?

TH: That is part of the *KMWorld Conference*. It grew out of an idea that people outside the library community did not necessarily know much about indexing and taxonomies, but had to deal with them in their business or educational institution and needed to know about them. Just as an example, last year it was amazing that we had about 200 people registered for *Taxonomy Boot Camp*,

against the grain people profile

Tom Hogan, Sr.

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BORN & LIVED: Born in Summit, NJ, and lived most of my life in New Jersey except for a few childhood years in Lancaster, PA, and five years as an adult in Louisville, KY, where I worked for **Data Courier**, which later became a part of **ProQuest**.

EDUCATION: Graduated from **LeMoyne College** in Syracuse, NY, where the Jesuits taught us how to think and reason. Majored in English because I enjoyed it and had no idea what I was going to do when I grew up. Spent my junior year in Rome, Italy, which was definitely a highlight of my college years. I did graduate work in international relations but found out the career path that would follow from that didn't interest me.

FAMILY: My wife and I have three children (can you still call a 46-year-old a child?) and ten grandchildren.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER: After bouncing around from various information services companies for about ten years, I realized I wouldn't be happy unless I could start my own business. **Plexus Publishing, Inc.** was my first venture in 1977, and **ITI**, which my partner **Roger Bilboul** and I started in 1979, are still alive and well. **Plexus** publishes books about New Jersey, the most famous of which is *Boardwalk Empire*, which was made into an HBO series. Somewhere along the line, I served as president of the **American Society of Information Science (ASIS, now ASIS&T)** and president of the **Association of Information Dissemination Centers (ASIDIC)**, which was later acquired by **NFAIS**.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE: Playing golf, sailing, reading on the beach, and watching my grandchildren play sports, which include soccer, lacrosse, baseball, wrestling, and gymnastics. As a grandparent you have to divide your time equally.

FAVORITE BOOKS: I particularly like books based on historical events, and I'm currently reading *The Boys in the Boat*. I also gobble up every **John Grisham** novel that is ever published.

PET PEEVES: I guess I'm pretty easy going for the most part, but politicians who regurgitate standard talking points really annoy me. And I think lack of funding for libraries is a national disgrace.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Work to help make **ITI** a creative, healthy, and employee-friendly company when I retire. 🐼

whereas the previous year only about 95 had registered. There is obviously a lot of interest in taxonomies.

DTH: You have a division called *Unisphere*. What is that?

TH: About four years ago, we acquired a magazine called *Database Trends and Applications (DBTA)*. When we say "database trends" in this context, we mean database software from companies like **Oracle** in a business environment, not the literary databases that we grew up with. The owner of *DBTA* approached us and asked if we would be interested in acquiring it; the company was called **Unisphere Research**. Its main product is the magazine, but it also publishes research reports on the database world or other technology areas. We have developed a proprietary process for doing user surveys and then reconstituting the information into a research report format.

Faulkner Information Services was another acquisition. **Faulkner** is a database of full-length reports on all kinds of information technology in the computer and communications marketplace. We acquired the company in 2004 from the owners who did not want to

continue with it. Our customers are universities, consulting companies, and major corporations. The interesting thing is that my very first job in 1969 was with a company called **Auerbach Info** that produced computer technology reports. **Auerbach** split in two; part of it went to New York, and part stayed here in New Jersey. Many years after I worked for them, I wound up acquiring the New Jersey part, which in its new incarnation became **Faulkner Information Services**.

DTH: How many employees does this all add up to?

TH: About 100.

DTH: It's quite a remarkable achievement to do all that with only 100 employees! How many locations do you have?

TH: We have seven in the U.S.: Medford, NJ, the headquarters; New Providence, NJ, where the directories are; Pennsauken, NJ (Faulkner); New York City (CRM); Camden, ME (KMWorld); a production office in Tampa, FL; and Lexington, KY, where some of our marketing people are housed.

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